



Asthma Triggers

Most people with asthma are bothered by certain things called "triggers." While each person's triggers are different, they all can make your child's asthma worse or cause your child to have an "attack." Once you know your child's triggers, you can take steps to help your child to have fewer, less harmful attacks.

Common asthma triggers include:

- Mold
- Pollen
- Animals
- Stress
- Dust (dust mites)
- Cockroaches
- Cigarette smoke
- Air pollution
- Exercise
- Anything your child is allergic to
- Viral infections (colds)
- Infection in the airways
- Cold and/or dry air
- Sudden changes of weather

Your child's doctor can help you find out what your child's triggers are. The doctor will probably ask you to make some changes at home. To prevent problems for your child, it will be important to follow your doctor's instructions. Some of the changes you might be asked to make are:

- Stop smoking in the house or car
- Keep pets outside or out of the bedroom
- Remove carpet
- Use pollen-free covers on mattresses
- Vacuuming regularly while the child is not at home

Also, your doctor will probably recommend use of asthma medications

to prevent problems or attacks. Some medicines are used every day, others only when needed. There are two basic groups of medicines: anti-inflammatory drugs and bronchodilators.

Anti-inflammatory medicines are given by mouth, in a shot, or inhaled as a mist. These drugs help prevent problems by preventing the airways from swelling or becoming inflamed. They also help by increasing the drainage of secretions from the airways.

Bronchodilators are used to open up the airways. This medicine will help relieve wheezing, breathlessness and chest tightness.

Taking medicine and avoiding triggers are two parts of an overall treatment plan. Your child's doctor will work with you to set up a plan that works best for your child. The purpose of a treatment plan is to:

- Reduce your child's exposure to triggers
- Use the least amount of medicine needed to control your child's asthma
- Return lung function to normal by controlling wheezing
- Reduce the number and severity of attacks your child has
- Set up an emergency plan in case of an asthma attack
- Help you feel comfortable about allowing your child to exercise or participate in normal activities
- Improve your child's sleep
- Decrease the number of days your child misses school or day care due to asthma